Food crisis in West Bengal

561. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is seized of the crisis situation in public distribution of foodgrains prevailing in West Bengal which has culminated into widespread social tension over the last few months;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to ascertain demands of foodgrains under PDS in the State and allocated/off-taken volumes thereof year-wise since 2002-03;

(c) the reasons for the food crisis in West Bengal; and

(d) the details of steps taken, if any, by Government in the light of the emerging situation to overcome the crisis on short and long-term basis for the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) Reports have been received about violent incidents in West Bengal during September-October, 2007 mentioning irregularities in distribution of ration commodities under TPDS. These reports have been sent to the State Government for getting inquires conducted into them, taking necessary action and submitting reports on action taken by the State Government. So far three reports have been received from the State Government. Details of incidents are enclosed as Statement. (*See* below).

The Central Government makes allocation of foodgrains to States and UTs under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) for all Below Poverty Line (BPL), including Antyodaya Anna Yojana (A A Y) on the basis of number of ration cards issued by the States/UTs or the Number of Households on the basis of poverty estimates of Planning Commission for 1993-94 and population projection of Registrar General of India as on 01.03.2000, whichever is less. While the allocation of foodgrains to States/UTs for BPL and AA Y families are being made @ 35 Kg. Per family per month, for the APL families, the allocation are made depending upon availability of foodgrains in the Central pool and by linking them with offtake in previous years. Details of Allocation and Offtake of rice and wheat to West Bengal from 2002-03 is enclosed as Statement (*See* below).

The State Government has reported that there have been no problems about allocation and distribution of foodgrains under the TPDS for BPL and AAY cardholdrs. The main reasons reported by the State Government for the agitation is improper distribution of wheat to APL cardholders by Fair Price Shop Dealers.

This issue has been taken up with the State Government for taking all necessary action to streamline functioning of TPDS in the State.

The State Government has reported reported initiation of suitable action against those responsible for malpractices in TPDS and violence against the FPS dealers.

Statement-I

Details of incidents against MR dealers (District-wise)

(*Status as on 30/10/2007*)

Districts	Blocks	Sub-Divisions	No. of MR Dealers	Remarks
	Burwan	Kandi	11	Loot-6, torched-5
	Khargram	-do-	13	Loot-6, torched-7
Murshi	Kandi	Kandi	3	Loot-3, torched-1
	Nabagram	Lalbag	10	Loot-4
		Total	37	
	Bolepur	Bolepur	2	Loot-2
	Labpur	-do-	10	Loot-2
	Nanur	-do-	6	Loot-6
	Suri	Suri	1	Ransacked-1
	Suri-II	-do-	1	Ransacked-1
	Dubrajpur	-do-	1	Ransacked-1, One suicide
	Saithai	-do-	2	Ransacked-I
	M. Bazar	-do-	1	Loot-1
	Rampurhut-1	Rampurhat	5	Loot-1
Birbhum	Rampurhut-2	-do-	2	Loot-1
	Mollarpur-1	-do-	2	Loot-2
	Mollarpur-2	-do-	6	Torched-2, Loot-3
	Nalhati-1	-do-	5	Loot3, torched-1
	Nalhati-2	-do-	5	Loot-5
		Total	49	
	Monlaswar	Kalna	3	Ransacked-3
	Katugram	Katwa	2	Police firing
	Monglekot	-do-	3	Torched-1
Burdwan	Purbaswari	-do-	2	Ransacked-2,
	Katwa-II	-do-	1	Ransacked-1
	Burdwan	Burdwan	2	MLA has been manhandled
	Galsi-1	Burdwan	2	Loot-1
	Barabani	Asansol	2	Ransacked-2
		Total	17	
	Patrasayar	Bishnupur	7	Ransacked-3
	Sonamukhi	-do-	17	Ransacked-2
	Joypur	-do-	8	
Bankura	Indas	-do-	4	
	Bishnupur	-do-	13	
	Gangajalghati	Bankura	10	Suicide one
	Raipur	Khatra	3	Suicide one
		TOTAL:	62	

N.B. Son of a harassed MR dealer at Nalhati, Birbhum, has committed suicide.

Statement-II

Details of allocation and offtake of foodgrains under TPDS of West Bengal for the period 2002-2003 *to* 2007-2008 (*upto September*)

(*in thousand tons*)

Year		Allotment				Offtake				% Offtake			
		BPL	APL	AAY	TOTAL	BPL	APL	AAY	TOTAL	BPL	APL	AAY	TOTAL
2002-2003	Rice	1,002.168	604.836	153.888	1,760.892	448.252	16.937	96.060	561.249	44.7	2.8	62.4	31.9
	Wheat	700.584	3641.934	153.900	4,496.418	505.020	261.802	107.515	874.337	72.1	7.2	69.9	19.4
	Total	1702.752	4246.770	307.788	6,257.310	953.272	278.739	203.575	1435.586	56.0	6.6	66.1	22.9
2003-2004	Rice	851.376	582.660	153.888	1,587.924	568.999	12.742	108.520	690.261	66.8	2.2	70.5	43.5
	Wheat	851.376	3506.520	153.900	4,511.796	646.757	464.853	110.038	1221.648	76.0	13.3	71.5	27.1
	Total	1702.752	4089.180	307.788	6,099.720	1215.756	477.595	218.558	1911.909	71.4	11.7	71.0	31.3
2004-2005	Rice	808.779	582.660	196.485	1,587.924	575.062	42.831	126.176	744.069	71.1	7.4	64.2	46.9
	Wheat	810.166	3506.520	195.110	4,511.796	684.738	881.996	134.297	1701.031	84.5	25.2	68.8	37.7
	Total	1618.945	4089.180	391.595	6,099.720	1259.800	924.827	260.473	2445.100	77.8	22.6	66.5	40.1
2005-2006	Rice	774.670	2102.508	281.263	3,158.441	703.399	31.630	220.440	955.469	90.8	1.5	78.4	30.3
	Wheat	673.299	1986.672	281.308	2,941.279	591.060	997.780	233.860	1822.700	87.8	50.2	83.1	62.0
	Total	1447.969	4089.180	562.571	6,099.720	1294.459	1029.410	454.300	2778.169	89.4	25.2	80.8	45.5
2006-2007	Rice	923.938	2747.136	342.722	4,013.796	492.965	330.392	284.367	1107.724	53.4	12.0	83.0	27.6
	Wheat	598.128	726.624	278.962	1,603.714	551.284	508.383	231.274	1290.941	92.2	70.0	82.9	80.5
	Total	1522.066	3473.760	621.684	5,617.510	1044.249	838.775	515.641	2398.665	68.6	24.1	82.9	42.7
2007-2008 upto September	Rice	478.242	46.200	174.546	698.988	382.444	54.077	150.933	587.474	80.0	117.1	86.5	84.0
	Wheat	298.548	314.240	136.296	749.084	286.648	286.253	115.424	688.325	96.0	91.1	84.7	91.9
	TOTAL:	776.790	360.440	310.842	1,448.072	669.092	340.350	266.357	1275.799	86.1	94.4	85.7	88.1